APULIA FILM COMMISSION
PUGLIA, SCENES TO EXPLORE

BALKAN FILMARKET

Cooperation Film Projects Beyond the Adriatic

EGO

East Gate Otranto

1st Edition,
20 - 21 September
2021, Otranto, Italy

PERFORMANCE & PERFORMERS
CONNECTING WORLDS

APULIA FILM COMMISSION
PUGLIA, SCENES TO EXPLORE

BALKAN FILMARKET

Otranto FILM Festival

PRESENT

Cooperation Film Projects Beyond the Adriatic

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FINANZIATO DA:

APULIA FILM COMMISSION
APULIA CINEFESTIVAL NETWORK
DISTRIBUIAMO LA CULTURA
UNIONE EUROPEA
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IN COLLABORAZIONE
COMUNE DI OTRANTO

EGO - EAST GATE OTRANTO

COOPERATION FILM PROJECTS BEYOND THE ADRIATIC

1st Edition, 20 - 21 September 2021

CREATE | COLLABORATE | SHARE

EGO - East Gate Otranto is an international initiative that brings together Italian, European and Western Balkans film professionals from the entire audiovisual supply chain. Its objective is to engage and enrich professional experiences, facilitate and enhance cooperation, discover and promote emerging talents, as well as to analyze new narrative and distributive forms of production in a macro-region with a strategic and increasingly growing geopolitical potential.

The film industry within the Balkan countries is booming. The quality and quantity of productions has improved remarkably in recent years. Their productions have notched up successes in international film festivals, and state financial support has been constantly on a steady growth track.

Five years ago, Apulia Film Commission joined forces with Mibact and ANICA to support the conception and the establishment of Balkan Film Market. Our joint vision was to shape the Balkan Film Market as a point of reference not only for Film Funds and Audiovisual Centers but also for international producers.

To materialize their vision, the founders had the idea to organize, in Otranto, an annual film market section focusing, among others, on cross-border project management (together with Italian, Balkan and Ionian/Adriatic audiovisual

agencies) that will lead to developing and financing new production partnerships and expanding the overall network.

EGO - East Gate Otranto invites all the realities having shared values and interests to use this platform and to share their experiences with a view to enhancing production and boosting regional and inter-regional cooperation.

The co-production between Italy and the Western Balkans countries is a trump card for stirring the interest of various local producers to participate in projects from a diverse selection of minority co-productions active in the region.

Funds of Creative Europe and the Media programme of the European Union is another opportunity. Participating in tenders and funding (applying together), including funds under the Creative Europe and the Media programme of the European Union, with co-producers from the Western Balkans countries offers a great financing opportunity for Italian companies.

Balkan film projects, with stories particularly rich in contents, promise a potential guarantee for international festivals. The collaboration with Italy will allow these projects to improve, optimizing their international interface and guaranteeing an increased audience thanks to the large presence of financial funds, such as those of the MIC, the Italian Film Commissions, and the internal and foreign Tax Credit.

On 20 September 2021, during the Otranto Film Festival, the Pitch Balkan will be organized. It is a showcase of the best Balkan projects before an audience of Italian and European producers. The Pitch Balkan will be followed by B2B meetings between producers and authors, as a unique platform for sharing information, learning about and analyzing financing opportunities available in the respective countries.

For all the reasons listed above, Italian producers interested in co-producing with the Western Balkans countries are invited to explore and experience first hand the promising opportunity that EGO - East Gate Otranto provides on its 1st edition, on 20 - 21 September 2021!

PROGRAMME

09/20/2021

09.30 - 10.00	Opening EGO 2021
10.00 - 13.30	Pitching
14.30 - 17.00	B2B business meetings between producers
17.30 - 18.30	Panel between representatives of Balkan institutions and representatives of Italian institutions AFC MIC ANICA

09/21/2021

10.00 - 13.00	B2B business meetings between producers
10.00 - 13.00	(Simultaneously with the B2B) meeting with representatives of Balkan institutions for Interreg planning
13.00 - 13.30	Summary of the EGO

3 KILOGRAMS OF HAPPINESS

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
ZORNITSA SOPHIA

COUNTRY
BULGARIA

CONTACT
ZORNITSA.SOPHIA@GMAIL.COM

TOTAL BUDGET
306,573 EURO

The director
Zornitsa Sophia

LOGLINE

A 52-year-old woman decides to help her daughter and her son-in-law, and gets pregnant with their baby against the will of her hisband, thus swirling the lives of all four of them. A true story from Sofia, Bulgaria, 2017.

SUMMARY

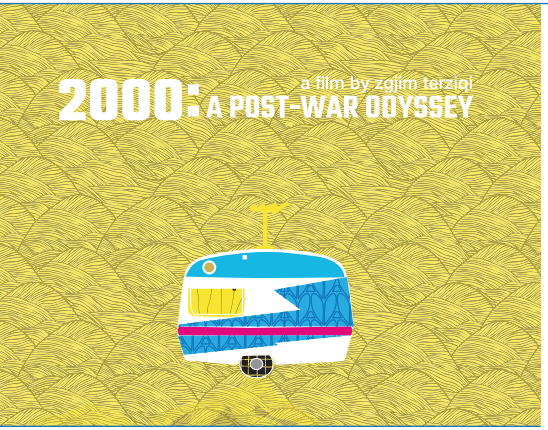
Parents decide to help their daughter, who can't conceive – her father sponsors a third invitro fertilization, and her mother gets pregnant with the fetus, despite her husband's protest. Human intervention in this delicate matter swings the world of both families into chaos. Whose child is this and how many mothers the baby has are the easy questions in this puzzle, where love, ethics and morality clash with free will, thus creating or destroing a universe.

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Zornitsa Sophia has a Master in Fine Arts, major in painting, and has presented at 65 exhibitions internationally and, together with the convicts, restored the church and the murals in Sofia Male Prison.
Her debut feature as writer, director and producer is MILA FROM MARS, 2004, with 16 awards, 60 festivals, Bulgarian submission for the Academy Awards and a national box office hit. Following are the documentaries DEATH AND ALL THE WAY BACK, 2005 and MODUS VIVENDI, 2007, and the feature FORECAST, 2009. VOEVODA, 2017, is her third feature film as writer, director and producer and first as actress in the leading role. It premiered at Shanghai IFF and Moscow IFF and is a national box office hit. She has directed 44 episodes in 6 PRIME TIME TV SERIES, the awarded theater play WHEN THE RAIN STOP FALLING and the opera ZAKHARI, THE PAINTER, which opened the season 2019/2020 of National Opera and Ballet in Sofia, Bulgaria.
Her films were selected in over 140 festivals, 40 competitions and received 19 awards, all are distributed nationally, two of them with record admissions and two are distributed internationally. Zornitsa Sophia served as a jury member at Warsaw, Valencia, Plzen film festivals among others and in the Artistic Committee of Bulgarian National Film Center and CEE. She leads workshops and "learning by doing" training on filmmaking in Bulgaria and abroad.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Surrogacy through in vitro fertilization – IVF, is undoubtedly a hot topic. My focus is in the storm whirled by this "intervention in God's deeds" and its impact on the human relationships. I investigate how this choice of free will resonates in all the four characters, constructing a new universe of unwritten laws.
Through dramedy as our genre, I will touch the cotroversial topics – dramatical for the characters and sometimes absurd when the bigger picture applies. I will use an intuitive and subjective storytelling as cinematic narrative and will bring contrast though music and sound.
I see the potential in this story in provoking ethical, emotional even spiritual questions revealing characters who could overcome all obsticles simply though acceptance.



2000: A POST-WAR ODYSSEY

DIRECTOR
ZGJIM TERZIGJI

PRODUCER
VALMIRA HYSENI

COUNTRY
KOSOVA

CONTACT
VALMIRA.HYSENI@GMAIL.COM

TOTAL BUDGET
576,200 EURO

LOGLINE

Lis, a 10 year old boy, whose father is missing, lives cramped in a small apartment with his family during early post-war Kosovo. The burden put up on him to become a man by society, pushes him to fulfill a suppressed dream and join a small circus crew of 3 French people who are in Kosovo to entertain the children. Through this journey, Lis will learn a lot about himself, and the French people about their naivete and ignorance about a war trauma and the actions it could lead to.

SUMMARY

In 2000, 6 months after the NATO bombing of Serbia due to their ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, chaos was diminished but anarchy flourished. Called the "Cold Peace" era by international journalists. LIS, a 10 year old boy, who's father is a missing person from the Kosovo war, lives in a cramped apartment with his resilient mother AJSHA (42), confused grandmother HAVA (72), stoic sister NORA (17) and infantile brother JONI(5).
Their city has signs of war all over. Buildings with bullet holes and burned marks, broken windows and smashed walls. They suffer from water and electricity shortages and can watch TV only when Lis is holding their indoors antenna at the right spot. They try listening to the news as much as they can. Every time there is talk of a potential new mass grave, they are on the edge of their seats. Lis is the only kid of the neighborhood who doesn't taunt the old Serbian Man of the neighborhood living in his van. When Lis' cousin ARTAN (20) is sent back from Germany, to which he fled during the war, things get only more complicated. Artan tries to make himself useful by looking for work every day, albeit not with success. At least Artan living with them, now scares off the creep neighbor who just recently broke in the abandoned apartment next to them and is now occupying it. A day after he has a dispute with his family, who sell his beloved Walkman, Lis accidentally encounters a small foreign circus troop, that stopped at his city for a show, in their journey throughout Kosovo to entertain the children of the land. The three clowns, 2 male and 1 female, arrived from a place of goodness and naivety, without having any clue how a war scared society exploring democracy looks like, and what it is capable of.
Lis amazed after experiencing their comedic routine joins them, after tricking them that he has no family and anywhere to go, and that he can help them navigate and be their translator. JEAN-PIERRE (39) is sceptic about taking him in, but he gets outvoted and persuaded by AGNÈS (33) and ROBERT (55). The small odyssey on the circus troops trailer throughout the deepest ends of Kosovo and their painful, heartbreaking and absurd adventure begins.

The director
Zgjim Terziqi

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Born in 1990 in Mitrovica, when Zgjim was 8 years old, he and his family had to flee Kosovo, because their house was burned down during the war. After many years of sacrifices and hard work, he could achieve his dream. Holding a BA and MA from the University of Prishtina in Film and TV directing, Zgjim is also a prolific screenwriter. Having written over 200 episodes for TV and tens of short films.
His debut short "A Month" (2017) and second short Salon (2019), traveled to over 70 film festivals including Cairo IFF, Atlanta FF, Torino FF, Rhode Island IFF, Brussels SFF, Busan ISFF, New Directors / New Films, TIFF, Hollyshorts etc. He won 10 awards at festivals around the world.
His first feature film in development "2000: A Post-War Odyssey" was selected as part of Berlinale Script Station 2020, Torino Film Lab Extended 2020, Valletta Film Lab 2019, Budapest Debut Film Forum 2020 and won a development fund from the Kosovo Cinematography Center. He is an alumni of Berlinale Talents 2020 and Sarajevo Talents 2016.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Being an introvert child, film wasn't only escapism for me, but the main source of joy for my infant persona. From my recollection, I was exposed to films as early as the age of 4, when my father bought a VHS recorder. My joy of films turned into an obsession and eventually brought the autodidact in me, as I would end up speaking fluent English and German only from watching films in the respective languages in a matter of couple of years. Of course, as a toddler I wasn't watching Bresson or Fassbinder, but rather Disney animations and German dubbed Adriano Celentano comedies. 2000: A Post-War Odyssey is inspired by a childhood experience of mine. After we returned to Kosovo from being war refugees in Turkey, we didn't have where to go, since our house was burned down during the war. We had to move to a different city. My parents, grandmother, my brother and I, lived in a one-room apartment provided by my uncle from end of 1999 to 2002. Even though I was still a child, I could recognize that this period was almost anarchical. Water shortage, electricity restriction, revenge crimes, occupation of private property, smuggling etc. One day, during my first year there, a trailer interrupted our football game at an improvised playground. It seemed to have appear out of nowhere. We were afraid at first, but then a group of three people came out dancing and juggling. The relief was immediate. Their routine lasted for about 30 minutes and I never saw them again. I kept thinking about them through the years; who they were, where did they go, what did they want, did they get it. This script is my romanization of their story.

EVERYBODY CALLS REDJO

DIRECTOR
IBER DÉARI

PRODUCER
SASHO PAVLOVSKI

COUNTRY
NORTH MACEDONIA

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TOTAL BUDGET
600,000 EURO

LOGLINE

Redjo, is the last house worker left in the village. He travels through different families problems and show us different stories filled with love and sadness, life and death, in the end everything fades away, and no one's calling him anymore.

SUMMARY

In the village of Slupkovo there is a huge emigration. Specially, the young population of the village. Almost all the young people left their homes and moved abroad looking for better life and any kind of work. The village is left only with old people and several middle-aged. Due to the fact that young people are missing, there is no one to work for 10 euros a day. Then, a man with a name Rexho appears. Rexho is a universal worker, he works all the things that the villagers need. Rexho, along with his little son called Nick and his wife Hira work together. Rexho works all the things starting from decorating, mowing yards, chopping trees, cleaning, etc. While his wife is cleaning houses or guarding children. The film tells us 6 different stories from the perspective of Rexho. Everywhere he goes, to each house, we will get to know the stories he inviels. And each story is a story of itself, Rexho is the protagonist who connects these stories. One day, Rexho meets the most dangerous man, a racketeer, in the village, Miftar. He always makes problems, but this time his problems affect Rexho's life and completelly change it. Will Redzo succeed in his fight to keep living in his Slupkovo?

The director
Ibër Deari

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Director, writer, producer, DOP Ibër Dearі born in Kumanova, Macedonia in 1990. He is a director and writer, known for My City Screams(2015), TOKA(2016), A long way Home(2017). Ibër Deari is award-winning director, his most recent film as director is My City Screams. He has been making films since high school, He has also written and directed a number of short fictional and documentary videos He continued the Film School in the University of Audiovisual Arts "ESRA" in Skopje. He graduated in 2013 with the film "LAST CONFESSION" , and he graduated in the master studies in "ESRA" and hereby was given the title Master of Arts in the Department of Film Direction with the film "TOKA" (Land) and graduation paper defence "TO FILM OR NOT TO FILM".

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Why this movie, and why exactly at this time? Because now is the best and the most current time for the main line problem. Although all the people have escaped to the European countries, and the rest of the world capitals, we have forgotten that we have slowly left this place, in order not to come back ever. Life here is really hard, but in Europe is really sad. The idea for this film stems from the complaints and the hopeless words we hear every day on television, in cafes, at home, and almost everywhere. Most of the people who leave the country are unfortunately the young generation. The question is where does this category of people go? For a better life or a harder life? They may be doing well in the economic part, but the emotional part is slowly endangering. Our place was left without young people, where there is no youth, no prospect, no life. Many companies complain that there are no employees, many families complain that they have no life, many adults complain that their children are left without a job. All those people who already know how is life like living in European countries already know that it is not easy, they know how it feels. Somewhere between this sad stories comes out the character of Redjio, which I can say is inspired from a real person's life. A poor man who does not generally get into politics to leave the country for a better life. He loves living a happy and careless life in Balkans and with his family. He takes advantage of the situation when somebody is looking for a one day worker. He is always available and accepts the work. He goes from house to house to work. He is very nice, loving, and lives only for the family, and for their happiness. Their only wish as a family is to save some money and go on vacation to the sea for the first time in their lives. To achieve this dream, they strive to work hard. This film is essentially a critique of society and policies that the country gives as a wrong message to the younger generations. As difficult as it is, we still have to fight to survive in our homes.
But what happens when the crooked people stay on your way? Can you keep on struggling not to leave, or that becomes impossible? Does anyone knows the right answers? That is why this film should be filmed and try to find right solutions. This movie is more like a comedy / drama because you can easily criticize a society by smiling rather than telling them how wrong they are. Besides humor Charlie Chaplin has managed to criticize the worst habits of society. I personally believe a lot in the script and realization of this film.

EMERGENCY EXIT

DIRECTOR
BOGDAN MURESANU

PRODUCER
DAN BURLAC

COUNTRY
ROMANIA

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TOTAL BUDGET
550,000 EURO

LOGLINE

A whole country was hoping to see the last day of Ceausescu s regime but no one knew when that day was to come.

SUMMARY

Elena is a promising actress in a big theater, called to replace a TV actress who fled the country in the middle of filming a propaganda show. Thinking he has a real career ahead of him, he accepts the proposal, not realizing that he has to compromise his beliefs and identity and recite patriotic poetry. Being now part of a failing system, of course, she also falls with it. Tibi and Vlad, exasperated by the system, try to escape the hermetically sealed country by crossing the Danube. Just when they thought they had finally reached a safe land in Serbia, they realize they are stranded on an island, in the middle of the river, without a boat. They get stuck, oblivious to the fact that they are now free. (Deputy-engineer) deputy engineer Dorin Popa is asked to become an informant of the Securitate. After his refusal to do so, someone frames him, making him pass as a traitor to the system. Now he is forced to comply or he will rot in prison. However, he has the courage (or the stupidity) to postpone his answer for the officer who recruits him. Under pressure, sign just when the system crashes.

The director
Bogdan Muresanu

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Award winning writer Bogdan Muresanu has shifted from literature and advertising to cinema with equal success. AS A SCRIPTWRITER: In 2008, he won the best short in HBO TIFF script writing competition with "The Human Torch" who received, production funding from the Romanian CNC the following year and premiered in 2013. Also in 2009 two more of Bogdan's scripts won at the Romanian CNC, development funding- "1985" and "The Magician". Bogdan's next screenplay, "Where is Sophia?" won best feature script in Oaxaca Film Festival, Mexico (2012) and an honorable mention in Canada International Film Festival, Vancouver (2013) . The script is currently in pre production with Adenium Films (Romania) director Anton Groves (UK-Romania). In 2014, "Opinci", a script for animation, directed by Anton Groves, was shortlisted for Robert Bosch award and then founded by CNC in the same year. In 2015, "The other man", a script for a feature to be directed by Stephan Komandarev, Bulgaria. 1985, a scriot for a feature film, developed in the Mediteranean Film Institute, won the best pitch award in TIFF, Transylvania. As a director, he produced and directed his first short film in 2012, based on his own script "Half Shaved". It won the Audience Award at "Anonimul" IFF Sf.Gheorghe (Romania) and was shown in festivals in Montreal, Cinequest, Cleveland, Reykjavik, York, Oaxaca, Maremetraggio, Lille, Reggio. In 2016, Bogdan finished his next short called "Spid". Same year, a short art film "Negruzzi 14" was show-cased at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in 2016.In 2017, the short animation called The Magician was undergoing pre-production while the short fiction The Christmas Gift was shot in March.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This is a film composed of a few intertwined stories whose characters are completely unaware that their present ordeals will come to an end the very next day. It is a black humor comedy but filmed and acted in a very realistic manner since Communism provided enough moments of absurdity. The stories (The Christmas Gift is one of them though here it is longer, of course) share a common feeling of useless desperation in a moment when the so much hated regime had reached the climax of its nonsense. The characters are also from various walks of life so that we can have an extended vision of those last hours of Ceausescu's hideous reign. They all take place from the morning of 20th of December to the next day when the dictatorship began to crumble.

JERËM

DIRECTOR
ISMET SIJARINA

PRODUCER
ISMET SIJARINA

COUNTRY
KOSOVO

CONTACT
ISMETSIJARINA@GMAIL.COM

TOTAL BUDGET
790,000 EURO

LOGLINE

A couple for whom life has in store extraordinary challenges decide to fight back one last time.

SUMMARY

Hektor, a middle-aged man, works in a dog shelter built by a German foundation. The shelter is built away from the city because dogs are considered as unwanted animals among humans and wherever they are found, they are killed by organized groups. The distance from work to home means that Hektor is away from his family, or rather say his wife Minka, every other week.

In fact, Hektor and Minka, even when near each other, they haven't talked to one-another for over 15 years now. They continue to live together for the sake of a beautiful past, which was broken, by the bitter event that ruined their lives.

Minka and Hektor are summoned to court to testify about the act of violence that was committed towards them. In order to protect his integrity and deny rumors that he and his wife were sexually abused during the war Hektor refuses to testify. However, the facts speak otherwise! There are 101 children, one of them brought to life by his wife Minka, who roam the streets and are not noticed by anyone. They are the conscience of the whole society, but they continue to remain the "shame" denied by all.

Sleepwalking is the next common destiny of this couple. Limited by "shame" to communicate in reality, they meet and love each other in another parallel universe, where moral conventions set by people do not matter.

In the coldest winter that can be remembered, Hektor is trapped by snow at the dog shelter along with Peter, a German artist, who comes to perform with the piano for 72 hours live on ZDF. An artistic performance in defense of dogs. This organization does not go well, since on the first day of the performance, the snow interrupts the broadcasting. Peter is trapped, inside the small hut where Hektor stands. This closeness to Peter reveals another side of Hector.

After a few days, with lots of incidents and love, Peter and Hektor decide to set off for the city despite the heavy snow. The hut burns down the night before and Peter barely rescues Hektor, who falls into his characteristic deep sleep. From this state, Hektor can only wake up if he hears the dog barking, a sound that reminds him of painful moments. The road to the city incites a completely banal conflict between Hektor and Peter, which turns out to be fatal for the latter.

Hektor returns home and finds Minka asleep. He notices that she had eaten food while sleepwalking, a characteristic of her, which keeps her overweight. The tired Hector falls asleep, this time a deeper sleep than ever. He wakes up in spring. He is violently brought to court by the police, but refuses to testify before another incident unfolds. At the trial break, Hektor and Minka, after many years of distance between them, lean on the corridor seats. This long-lost energy makes Hektor fall back into a deep sleep. Unable to obtain his testimony, the case is closed in Court. The lights of the courtroom go out, while inside on the public seats, in the shape of silhouettes, stand only 101 teenagers, waiting, for the truth to come out.

The director
Ismet Sijarina

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Ismet Sijarina is a Film Director, Producer, Scriptwriter, and Professor living in Pristina, Kosovo. Ismet is a staunch advocate on social issues, which has led him to be engaged in the field of Documentary Film for years. His debut Feature Film "COLD NOVEMBER" had its premiere at San Sebastian's 66th International Film Festival in 2018. Ismet presented his films and won numerous awards in many festivals, amongst which at San Sebastian, Thessaloniki, Sarajevo Film Festival, Zurich IFF, Bosporus, Goteborg, Karlovy Vary, RiverRun, goEast, Saint Louis, and many more. Currently, he is working on the development of his next Feature Film "BUREK" supported by the Kosovo Cinematography Center. Ismet is a Member of the European Film Academy since 2018.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This story centers around justice. But is it possible to bring justice through law? Or, laws and courts are a tool that allows killers to become ex-killers, perpetrators to become ex-perpetrators, and criminals of various natures to become ex-criminals. Every individual who goes through the filters of law and who is punished, after serving the sentence, feels washed, in front of the deed he/she has done. While the victim can never be described as one ex-victim. She/he remains in her/his suffering, forever. There is no punishment for the criminal, in proportion to the pain inflicted on the victim! On this attitude lies "JERËM" (Sleepwalking), a story which follows the fate of a couple, for whom, life has in store extraordinary challenges. Through the story of Hektor and Minka, I first address the subjective point of view. But, the subjective one cannot be isolated from the collective mosaic. Therefore, sociopolitical developments, mentality, legitimacy, transition, and everything else around the characters are the other important pillars of "JERËM" (Sleepwalking). And by sleepwalking the characters act in the light of the moon, not to illuminate some dark moments of their lives but to illustrate metaphorically the walk of an entire society on the long path of socio-economic transition. All of the above makes JERËM "Personal & collective story at the same time".

FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE

DIRECTOR
IVAN MARINOVIC

PRODUCER
MARIJA STOJANOVIC

COUNTRY
MONTENEGRO

CONTACT
ADRIATIC.WESTERN@GMAIL.COM

TOTAL BUDGET
1,002,629 EURO

LOGLINE

Dragana gives up marrying Momo two days before the date. His dangerously stubborn father forces the disastrous wedding into happening.

SYNOPSIS

Two days before the wedding the bride said she will not do it. Even if everything is ready and everyone knows about it.

Leso, the merciless patriarch of groom's family, offers this to the rebellious bride - do the bloody wedding, act it out, and then go wherever you want the next day. She accepts. The offended groom still hopes she will stay.

A traditional wedding includes a series of absurd steps, soaked with alcohol, gunfire and dynamite. This farcical event will also bring worst of their personal anxieties into play.

The director
Ivan Marinovic

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Ivan Marinovic is an award-winning Montenegrin director, screenwriter and producer known for the film The BlackPin. He was born in 1984 in Kotor, Montenegro. He graduated in industrial design at the Politecnico di Milano Universityin 2007 and received a master's degree in film directing at the famous Prague film and television academy – FAMU in 2011. He is a winner of a Sam Spiegel award for best script in Jerusalem Film Lab in 2014. He is an alumni of otherprestigious programs, such as MFI2, Midpoint, Berlinale Script Station and Script East where he won KrzstofKieslowski award for best East European script. His feature debut The Black Pin premiered in 2016 at the Sarajevo Film Festival's Competition program. The film featured at over 45 international and regional festivals, including SEE Fest Los Angeles, West Wind Film Festival St.Petersburg, Vilnius Film Festival, Uruguay International Film Festival, where it won ten awards, including awards for best film, actor, actress, screenplay, set design, etc. The film was also a Montenegrin Oscar candidate for 86thAcademy Awards. Ivan is a co-writer of HBO Adria show The Island, which is currently in development. He was a guest lecturer at FAMU Academy in Prague, FIOFA Institute in Ohrid, and held Master Class lectures at Chapman University in California.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Some years ago, there was a wedding on my Montenegrin homeland peninsula that went horribly wrong. The bride decided right before the D-day, that she doesn't want to do it. However, the peer pressure she found herself under was enormous. The people are invited, the gifts are bought, and for God sakes the food and the musicians are already paid in advance. What will people tell? So a deal was made that she will act the thing out and leave the next day.

I couldn't resist the idea that the as the wedding progressed, the information that everything is fake was slowly spreading. As a matter of fact the people who participated confirmed this to me. The story was simply too good not to spread around. Still, it didn't stop them from consciously participating in this farce. They all played their parts.

It made me think of - how many times do we consciously participate in something we don't believe in? The idea that we do it all the time, haunted me.

What also haunted me was her - the bride. Her wonderfully rebellious spirit, and her need to confront her deepest fears no matter the cost. In this situation, the costs are very interesting to explore. They are funny, they are ridiculous, they involve a whole lot of colorful characters, and they are tragic to their core.

For my second feature "Forever hold your peace" feels like a type of traumatic comedy that I feel most comfortable with. The story is on the line of my biggest influences, Neorealism (that goes well with my Mediterranean background), and my school - FAMU, or Czech cinematic tradition and early Forman works.

The humanity of the people, and the irrational aspect to them is very inspiring. But also, there is a strong tradition and conservatism that is worth dissecting and demystifying. Therefore this wedding story gives me the space to explore many themes that I find important. And without throwing metaphors in the face of audience my wish is to stay subtle albeit politically relevant, while exploring the most difficult genre there is - comedy.

THE RIVER

DIRECTOR:
HARIS RAFTOGIANNIS

WRITERS:
HARIS RAFTOGIANNIS & NIKOS LEROS

PRODUCER:
ELENI KOSSYFIDOU - BLACKBIRD PRODUCTION

SECURED BUDGET
100 000 €

TOTAL BUDGET
750 000 €

FUNDING BODY
THE GREEK FILM CENTER

LOGLINE

What is "progress" for Makis, is a threat for Maria. A car accident brings them closer. The orgasmic taste of Mcnuggets even closer. But it takes much more to be together

SUMMARY

The long motorway crosses the city from one side to the other. It floats like a river, connecting two different worlds: the modern world of the airport with the deserted, working class villages. Makis, comes from the modern world. He applies black hawk-shaped stickers to the transparent sound barriers of the motorway. The stickers prevent the small birds from crashing to the barriers and keep the road safe. Maria lives in the old world, in an isolated settlement of a few elderly people, who live off the "River" and whatever is washed "ashore". Maria collects the dead birds which end up on the poor community's dinner table. Makis' so called "progress" is a threat to her world. When Makis emerges in Maria's neighborhood to finish his job, she stages a car accident to get rid of him. Makis runs Maria over. Driven by his sense of doing things right, Makis comes closer to Maria, offering a compensation. She grabs his money and her community gradually upgrades. Makis' wish is to make the injured girl happy. He guides her to his world, a world unseen by her. And their common passion for Mcnuggets brings them even closer. But Makis' money is running out. And Maria's people don't want to go back to the old days.
Now, that Makis is actually broke and desperate, it is Maria's turn to rescue him. For her world, taking his side, is a betrayal. Therefore, chased from their "solid" worlds, Makis and Maria, have to find another, a better world.

The Director
Haris Raftogiannis

SHORT BIO OF DIRECTOR

Born in Athens. He studied Sociology at the University of Crete and History of Cinema (MA, University of Crete). His short, mid-length and documentary films True Blue (2016), Democracy: The Way of the Cross (2013), A Silent Sea (2012), Seeders' Seed (2011), On the Butcher's Bench (2006), and The Long Hall (2005)were selected for numerous European film festivals and awarded in Greece.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"The River" is an existential love story of two people, who struggle to find themselves and their position in the world. Atragicomedy film in terms of a fairy tale, about two different worlds, two "opponents" and their way to be one. Like in all fairy tales, the film contains elements of the real world: The enormous land cut that looks as a River, the eternal flow of the cars, the ambience of the motorway that sounds as a river, the stickered birds on the transparent panels across the motorway.

In other words, a draw of a virtual River, that crosses the big City, linking the two opposite worlds, the modern and the old. All these elements do exist in the region of Athens, Greece. However, in the film, the region is never been called and seen as Athens, but as a neutral place that can be set anywhere in the world.

Makis' world is the colorful, Americanized place of wealth and much waste, with the typical road-movie spots: The big motorway, the big cars, the fast food diners, the huge parking lots. Makis, devoted on serving the common good, drives up and down the Motorway as a lonely knight with his only pal, "Goliath", the immortal van. On the other pole, lies Maria's tiny and isolated world, a Mad Max look alike community, that survives mostly from the modern world's waste.

Maria is like the "Princess", her Mother on the wheelchair stands as the "Queen", Kostas is the evil and ambitious Maria's lover and the aged people wait for the birds to crush into the sound barriers. Both worlds, seem as solid environments for the two characters to live in, as "a place to be". But life is more chaotic than the characters think. Just as like the carefree birds that fly around. Their unique and strong eyesight will warn them if something is wrong. But birds, cannot discriminate a very simple thing that stands in front of their eyes: the transparent panels. The shock that they get, it might turn to be crucial for their existence. Makis and Maria will go on after their own crush, till they'll find their way to be free. The general tone follows Hollywood's classic films. The style is closer to an ironic and often grotesque depiction of reality, reminding Cohen's cinema, blending genres from melodramas to road movies.

QUEEN BROTHER

DIRECTOR
BUJAR ALIMANI / JORGO DIAMANTI

SCRIPTWRITER
JORGO DIAMANTI

PRODUCER
BUJAR ALIMANI

COUNTRY
ALBANIA

CONTACT
90PRODUCTIONAL@GMAIL.COM

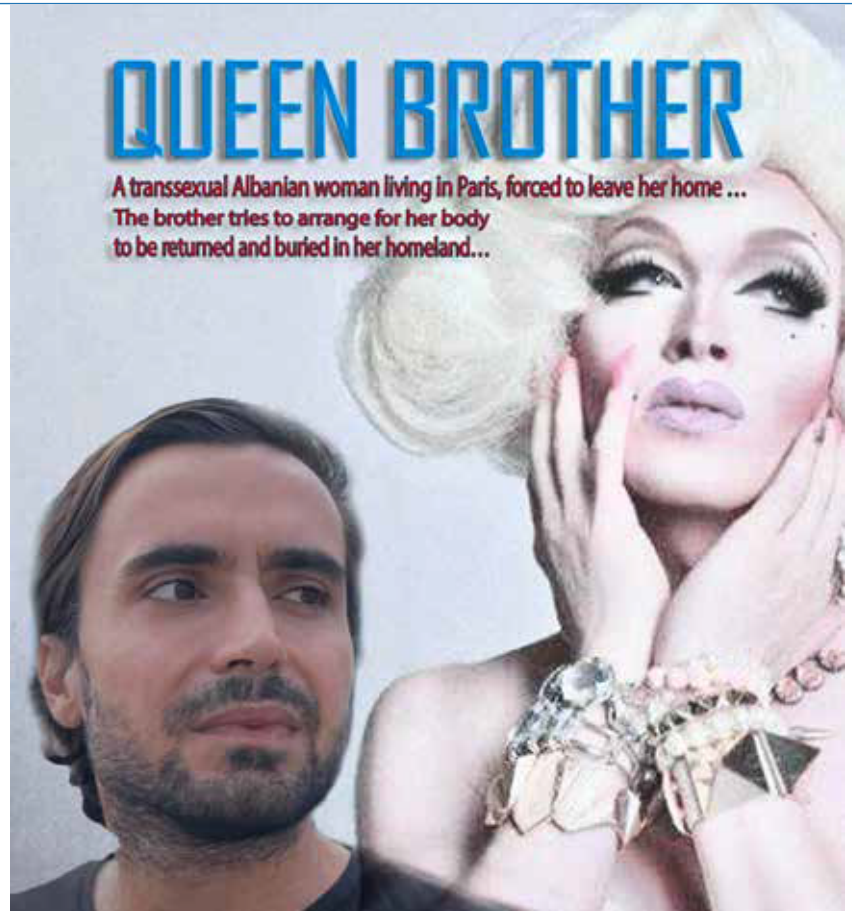
TOTAL BUDGET
850,000 EURO

LOGLINE

A transsexual Albanian woman living in Paris, forced to leave her home and family decades prior as a dammed homosexual, finds herself at death's door and tries to arrange for her body to be returned and buried in her homeland.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Adrian leads a content life with family and parents in a quiet rural Albanian town. One day out of the blue a Frenchman named Toni Panie appears at their doorstep. He informs the family that their eldest son Gëzim who lives in Paris, is dying and that a member of the family must travel to bring him back for burial in Albania.
It has been almost thirty years since the family banished Gëzim for being homosexual. In the meantime, Gëzim has lives as a transsexual whilst amassing a considerable amount of wealth in France band Albania. The wealth may be a motivator for the family to consider accepting him back, alas in death. Adrian decides to head for Paris to get his brother's body now a transgender woman, a taboo and a scandal for his family, and bring her back to Albania vía Italy.


QUEEN BROTHER
A transsexual Albanian woman living in Paris, forced to leave her home ...
The brother tries to arrange for her body
to be returned and buried in her homeland...

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We have been invited to participate in this special project that will tell a story that depicts the Albanian society as one not that different than others societies. Two topologies are immediately apparent in the script, that of Albania and the western perspective depicted by the French, Italian and even Greek countries and their respective geographies, in contemplation with the psychological construct of the main characters in the story, which contrast everything else.
This story is full of colors which contrasts death, the ever connector of characters that is always a point of reference and a crossroad, from which the heroes can always embark journeys they may have had contemplated otherwise. Sacrifice is deployed and used akin to an ancient rite, as well as the return of the body of the deceased brother, that reminds us old Balkan legends, which solves conflicts and alleviates spirits. The story is not about grief, instead it's a song about humanity, love, and goodness in people although, death is sitting at the table.
The script is complete and gives one the ability to use different perspectives and camera angles, colors, clothing and wardrobe, music, locations, and the actors who will inhabit these challenging, unique, and beautiful characters.

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